

# VERMONT TELEGRAPH.

TWO DOLLARS PER ANNUM.]

BY ORSON S. MURRAY.

"I AM SET FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE GOSPEL."  
BRANDON, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1839.

[PAYABLE WITHIN FOUR MONTHS.]

VOL. XII. NO. 2.

THE LAKE GEORGE ASSOCIATION will pardon me for transferring to the Telegraph a large portion of their Circular Letter. It is from the pen of brother Delany, of Ticonderoga. It needs no praise. It will speak for itself to all who read it.

## CIRCULAR LETTER.

The Ministers and Delegates of the Lake George Baptist Association, convened at Bolton, 4th and 5th September, 1839, To the Churches which they represent:

DEAR BRETHREN: Let us

1.—Contemplate benevolence as exercised towards ourselves. And

1. Take notice of it displayed in temporal blessings. Our wants, though innumerable, are regularly supplied by the ever-opening hand of a munificent Providence. Though "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," still He annually hands it over to us, with its inestimable virtue, to use it as we think proper. If "the cattle on a thousand hills are His," in an interesting sense they are *ours* also, for we have ourselves and their wonderful utility entirely at our control. He lays the winds and the waves, with every element of nature, under special contributions to subserve our interests. The cloud-clad mountain contributes to our benefit, nor does the stony rock ever refuse us advantages. We have our forests and our fields, our grain and our vegetables. We have our streams and our dams, our ponds and our lakes. We have our sheep and our teams, our logs and our mills. We have our relatives and friends, our neighbors and associates. We have our doctors and teachers, our merchants and mechanics. We enjoy light and liberty, prosperity and peace. We are not the disciples of impostors, the dupes of delusion, the votaries of error, or the hobby-horse of priestcraft. We occupy an exalted position in the most highly favored nation that has ever yet appeared on the face of the globe. Eminent innumerable, artificial and natural, are everywhere in motion to secure our welfare. In short, as some great river that majestically flows from a never failing well-spring, and bears onward on its bosom rich cargoes of supplies for increasing distribution, so a full current of benevolence perpetually proceeds from a Fountain inexhaustible, and brings us blessings inestimable every hour that revolves. And who are the recipients of so many favors?—the objects of so much goodness? Beings that merit hell. How perfectly wonderful! But this after all, when compared with another order of benevolence, is no more than what the appertinances of the paschal lamb were to the blood sprinkled on the door posts; or the human nature of the son of man to the divinity of the Son of God. It is merely a loose appendage of a dispensation of mercy—that striking modification of uncreated benevolence.

2. If we wish to see benevolence fully unfolded, most gloriously illustrated, let us look into the manger in Bethlehem; then on a sacred ministry performed in the Holy land; then into the garden of Gethsemane; then into the palace of Caiaphas; then before the bar of the double-minded Pilate; then on shoulders lacerated by the Roman scourge; and then on the cruel cross between the two thieves. In this range of our thoughts we shall find benevolence signally personified, living, laboring, bleeding, dying. There we shall find it,—while meeting malignity incarnate, and fully enraged by the late contact of innocence,—comforting the bereaved, consoling the afflicted, soothing the sorrowful, and chasing from their human prey miseries innumerable. O yes! there we will find it, eradicating distempers, discomfiting devils, feeding the hungry, giving health to the languishing; vigor to the paralyzed, sight to the blind, life to the dead; and in the midst of excruciating agonies, produced by *malicious malevolence*, pouring out atoning blood between the malevolent and hell. There we will find it mysteriously incarnate, defraying infinite expense to benefit the very guilty. There we can see the "man of sorrow" weeping over man's helplessness, groaning over his turpitudes, ignominiously hanging with wicked malefactors, and in his flight to his native paradise, taking one of them from the cross as an imperishable trophy of his triumphant benevolence. There we can see him, in the plenitude of his mercy, in the overflowing of his love, treading the wine-press of divine

wrath all alone; drying up the full source of calamity and crime; quietly entering the dark dungeon of the king of terrors; then heaving up and breaking the massy bars of death; driving back the thick bolts of perdition's ponderous portals; and coming forth a mighty conqueror over death, hell and the grave. Thus this glorious Leader "led captivity captive, and received gifts for men." Then the fountain was thrown open for sin and uncleanness: then the stream of salvation began freely to flow. Very soon its waters rolled over the nations, and came down to our ancestors when tattooing their bodies, and worshipping the misse-toe. Nor has it ceased yet to move; it continues to flow onward. Hence it is that we have the Bible, with its ennobling principles, and ten thousand advantages of plucking our poor nature from the ruins of our apostasy. And shall we plead poverty when called on to do good?

If we are christians, then "all things are *ours*, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Caphas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all things are *ours*, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's." And shall we plead poverty? Are we, by nature foolish? guilty? corrupted? condemned? Jesus Christ, by *grace*, "is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." If we are fallible, in Him we have an infallible Director; if we sin, in Him "we have an Advocate with the Father;" if we are poor, in Him we have "durable riches and righteousness." And shall we plead poverty? Having an interest in Him, we stand upon a rock in the midst of infinite wealth, *all* at the disposal of infinite benevolence,—benevolence more anxious to bestow, than the most tender hearted mother is to relieve the crying wants of her weeping babe; and more ardently longing to find fit subjects to receive, than the most affectionate female could long for the return of an endeared and long-absent companion.

This is our condition, brethren. And now we come to ask, what more do we want? what more do we need? what more could boundless beneficence bestow? And again we put the question, shall we plead poverty? O "tell it not in Gath! publish it not in the streets of Askelon!" No! We "have all, and abound." But what shall we do with it?

11—We answer, and point you out some objects of benevolence.

1. Consider the spiritually destitute of our own country. Here are many hundreds, though willing to receive it, left lamentably destitute of the precious bread of life. Add to these the thousands of foreigners and other perishing beings, that are scattered over the nation. Multitudes of these are devoted to the papacy, and their souls overflowing with its direful abominations. Their prejudices and principles, to which they cling as to their existence, are alike perilous to civil and religious freedom. Whenever popery can gain the ascendancy, it will level every thing around it, under an intolerable supremacy. A pre-eminence of cruel despotism is its prevailing characteristic. Its very genius is hostility against every right of man. Employing the most infernal machinery to achieve its hellish purpose, it would struggle and yearn for the extermination of protestantism.\* Hordes of its votaries pass annually to the west; and have we nothing to fear from them? nothing to deprecate? The Baptist Convention of this State, and the Baptist Home Mission Society, though clogged and embarrassed, have struggled for years to oppose those influences, and benefit those multitudes. But though they strive to act as faithful watch-guards to the church and to the nation,—though they labor indefatigably for the good of deathless souls, still their operations are limited, their agency is circumscribed.—And why? Their treasures are exhausted, and the churches are too covetous to replenish them.

2. Consider next the poor famishing heathen: no less than six hundred millions, blinded by superstition. Some of these souls are this moment perhaps passing from the burning funeral pile, from the crushing car of Juggernaut, or from the wasting water of the Ganges to the doleful home of the idolater in the wil-

\*The writer was once a papist, he therefore knows what he says.

derness of hell. Here we might dwell and give an awful delineation of the horrors of heathenism, but our limits will not allow it. O, who of us would be an idolater, to fling the babe to the crocodile—to swing by the iron hooks—to be crushed by ponderous wheels—thus to shed blood that could not possibly atone—thus to lose life only to gain eternal death! But millions are doing so, and who will pity them!

3. Consider last, but not least, the poor down-trodden slave. A certain spot of our land is consecrated to liberty; but it is polluted by vassalage, and the moral filth of its influence! There you have the emporium of freedom, and the foul mart of the slave-trade! There hangs the cap of liberty, and under it the yoke of bondage! There is the capitol of independence, and the loathsome jail for crimeless vassals! There is the blooming nursery of republicanism, and in it, the smoking hot-bed of slavery! There is the spread eagle of democracy, but she is flying off with the liberties of twenty-seven hundred thousand! There is the star-spangled standard, ever furled over the slave coffles! There are the living oracles of freemen, and their intellectual merchandize! There burning eloquence goes forth against every kind of aristocracy, and, in the same speech, to defend the most abominable despotism!—There is the red-haired slave, and the dark-haired slave; the thin-lipped slave, and the thick-lipped slave; the strait-haired slave, and the curl-haired slave; the half-cast slave, and the black-jet slave. O amalgamation! amalgamation! how you scare us at the north! And how many more living absurdities, and monstrous anomalies will you find in those 10 miles square? Just as many as could be produced by the many-headed idol of this Commonwealth, at whose infernal shrine not less than the whole MAN is immolated. The poor being who bears the galling yoke is not only a *moral piece of goods, an intelligent commodity*, bartered, mortgaged, and sold under the stroke of the hammer, but the Bible is kept from him, and every other means to improve his imperishable nature.—Thus this vindicated system of national disgrace, while it tears from his hands the immunities of man, daringly usurps the authority of God.

Now, brethren, the question is, do we possess feelings of philanthropy—feelings of genuine disinterested benevolence? If we have an interest in Jesus, if we are partakers of the divine nature, we certainly do. Then we must be missionaries, and not only so, but abolitionists. He was a Missionary, and a glorious Abolitionist.—Do not be startled at this. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. He came to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. If He came to seek us, then He was a Missionary; if He came to put away sin, He was certainly an Abolitionist. For, is not slavery a sin? O yes: it is blood-red criminality! Take notice again:—Now commandeth He all men every where to repent.—Not by degrees, or gradually, but NOW!! And what is this now, but the radical *immediatism* of the Anti-slavery enterprise?

Here then brethren are millions of objects for our christian benevolence. But still it may be asked what can we do?—We can do much if we are willing.—What if we are obliged to scrape up a living among the broken ribs of nature. The poorest of us can give as much, at least, as the poor widow. And where in the annals of human benevolence does a case of liberality stand forth more prominently than that of the same widow?—Her panegyrist was the King of Glory; He who will soon say, "well done good and faithful servant," to every faithful partaker of His heaven-born benevolence.—We appeal then to your hearts, and through them to your pockets, in behalf of these objects. Others are endeavoring to obviate their woes. And shall this Association remain behind them all? We cannot bear such an idea. O, where is the spirit of Carey, of Ann Judson, and Wilberforce? Where is the spirit of those Baptists, who, when the Church was in her infancy, laid their *all* on the burning altar of a world's emancipation from every yoke of bondage? Baptists have been always foremost in the enterprise against sin. Well, brethren, let us follow their footsteps. Let us stand forth in the very

van of benevolent operations; let us move out into the front ranks of enterprising philanthropy. And if we see them no sooner, we shall surely behold some trophies of rich grace redeemed by our agency, when we reach the fair banks of eternal deliverance.

The following "Sketch of the Modern Astronomy," found in one of Chalmers' sermons, will richly repay repeated perusals.

A Sketch of the Modern Astronomy.  
"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"  
PSALM viii. 3, 4.

I have, with some hesitation, prevailed upon myself to attempt an argument which I think fitted to soften and subdue those prejudices which lie at the bottom of what may be called the infidelity of natural science; if possible to bring over to the humility of the Gospel, those who expatiate with delight on the wonders and sublimities of creation; and to convince them that a loftier wisdom still than that even of their high and honorable acquirements, is the wisdom of him who is resolved to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

It is truly a most Christian exercise to extract a sentiment of piety from the works and the appearances of nature. It has the authority of the Sacred Writers upon its side, and even our Savior himself gives it the weight and the solemnity of his example. "Behold the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin, yet your heavenly Father careth for them." He expatiates on the beauty of a single flower, and draws from it the delightful argument of confidence in God. He gives us to see that taste may be combined with piety, and that the same heart may be occupied with all that is serious in the contemplations of religion, and be at the same time alive to the charms and the loveliness of nature.

The Psalmist takes a still loftier flight. He leaves the world, and lifts his imagination to that mighty expanse which spreads above it and around it. He wings his way through space, and wanders in thought over its immeasurable regions.—Instead of a dark and unpeopled solitude, he sees it crowded with splendor, and filled with the energy of the Divine presence. Creation rises in its immensity before him, and the world, with all which it inherits, shrinks into littleness at a contemplation so vast and so overpowering. He wonders that he is not overlooked amid the grandeur and the variety which are on every side of him, and passing upward from the majesty of nature to the majesty of nature's Architect, he exclaims, "What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou shouldst deign to visit him?"

It is not for us to say, whether inspiration revealed to the Psalmist the wonders of the modern astronomy. But even so the mind be a perfect stranger to the science of these enlightened times, the heavens present a great and elevating spectacle; an immense concave reposing upon the circular boundary of the world, and the innumerable lights which are suspended from on high, moving with solemn regularity along its surface. It seems to have been at night that the piety of the Psalmist was awakened by this contemplation, when the moon and the stars were visible, and not when the sun had risen in his strength, and thrown a splendor around him, which bore down and eclipsed all the lesser glories of the firmament. And there is much in the scenery of a nocturnal sky, to lift the soul to pious contemplation. That moon, and these stars, what are they? They are detached from the world, and they lift you above it. You feel withdrawn from the earth, and rise in lofty abstraction above this little theatre of human passions and human anxieties. The mind abandons itself to reverie, and is transferred, in the ecstasy of its thoughts, to distant and unexplored regions. It sees nature in the simplicity of her great elements, and it sees the God of nature invested with the high attributes of wisdom and majesty.

But what can these lights be? The curiosity of the human mind is insatiable, and the mechanism of these wonderful heavens has, in all ages, been its subject and its employment. It has been reserved for these latter times, to resolve this great and interesting question. The sublimest powers of philosophy have been called to the exercise, and astronomy may now be looked upon as the most certain and best established of the sciences.

We all know that every visible object appears less in magnitude as it recedes from the eye. The lofty vessel as it retires from the coast, shrinks into littleness, and at last appears in the form of a small speck on the verge of the horizon. The eagle with its expanded wings, is a noble object; but when it takes its flight into the upper regions of the air, it becomes less to the eye, and is seen like a dark spot upon the vault of heaven. The same is true of all magnitude. The heavenly bodies appear small to the eye of an inhabitant of this earth, only from the immensity of their distance. When we talk of hundreds of millions of miles, it is not to be listened to as incredible. For remember that we are talking of those bodies which are scattered over the immensity of space, and that space knows no termination.—The conception is great and difficult, but the truth is unquestionable. By a process of measurement which it is unnecessary at present to explain, we have ascer-

tained first the distance, and then the magnitude of some of those bodies which roll in the firmament; that the sun, which presents itself to the eye under so diminutive a form, is really a globe, exceeding, by many thousands of times, the dimensions of the earth which we inhabit; that the moon itself has the magnitude of a world; and that even a few of those stars, which appear like so many lucid points to the unassisted eye of the observer, expand into large circles upon the application of the telescope, and are some of them much larger than the ball which we tread upon, and to which we proudly apply the denomination of the universe.

Now, what is the fair and obvious presumption? The world in which we live, is a round ball of a determined magnitude, and occupies its own place in the firmament. But when we explore the unlimited tracts of that space, which is every where around us, we meet with other balls of equal or superior magnitude, and from which our earth would either be invisible, or appear as small as any of those twinkling stars which are seen on the canopy of heaven. Why then suppose that this little spot, little at least in the immensity which surrounds it, should be the exclusive abode of life and of intelligence? What reason to think that those mightier globes which roll in other parts of creation, and which we have discovered to be worlds in magnitude, are not also worlds in use and in dignity? Why should we think that the great Architect of nature, supreme in wisdom as he is in power, would call these stately mansions into existence, and leave them unoccupied? When we cast our eye over the broad sea, and look at the country on the other side, we see nothing but the blue land stretching obscurely over the distant horizon.—We are too far away to perceive the richness of its scenery, or to hear the sound of its population. Why not extend this principle to the still more distant parts of the universe? What though, from this remote point of observation, we can see nothing but the naked roundness of your planetary orbs? Are we therefore to say, that they are so many vast and unpeopled solitudes; that desolation reigns in every part of the universe but ours; that the whole energy of the divine attributes is expended on one insignificant corner of these mighty works; and that to this earth alone belongs the bloom of vegetation, or the blessedness of life, or the dignity of rational and immortal existence?

But this is not all. We have something more than the mere magnitude of the planets to allege, in favor of the idea that they are inhabited. We know that this earth turns round upon itself; and we observe that all those celestial bodies, which are accessible to such an observation, have the same movement. We know that the earth performs a yearly revolution round the sun; and we can detect in all the planets which compose our system, a revolution of the same kind, and under the same circumstances. They have the same succession of day and night. They have the same agreeable vicissitude of the seasons. To them, light and darkness succeed each other; and the gaiety of summer is followed by the dreariness of winter. To each of them the heavens present as varied and magnificent a spectacle; and this earth the encompassing of which would require the labor of years from one of its puny inhabitants, is but one of the lesser lights which sparkle in their firmament. To them, as well as to us, has God divided the light from the darkness, and he has called the light day, and the darkness he has called night.—He has said let there be lights in the firmament of their heaven, to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of heaven, to give light upon the earth; and it was so. And God has also made to them great lights. To all of them he has given the sun to rule the day; and to many of them has he given moons to rule the night. To them he has made the stars also. And God has set them in the firmament of heaven, to give light unto their earth; and to rule over the day, and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness; and God has seen that it was good.

In all these greater arrangements of divine wisdom, we can see that God has done the same things for the accommodation of the planets that he has done for the earth which we inhabit. And shall we say, that the resemblance stops here, because we are not in a situation to observe it? Shall we say, that this scene of magnificence has been called into being, merely for the amusement of a few astronomers? Shall we measure the counsels of heaven by the narrow importance of the human faculties? or conceive, that silence and solitude reign throughout the mighty empire of nature; that the greater part of creation is an empty parade; and that not a worshipper of the Divinity is to be found through the wide extent of yon vast and immeasurable regions?

It stands a delightful confirmation to the argument, when, from the growing perfection of our instruments, we can discover a new point of resemblance between our earth and the other bodies of the planetary system. It is now ascertained, not merely that all of them have their day and night, and that all of them have their vicissitudes of seasons, and that some of them have their moons to rule their night and alleviate the darkness of it. We can

see of one, that its surface rises into inequalities, that it swells into mountains and stretches into valleys; of another, that it is surrounded by an atmosphere which may support the respiration of animals; of a third, that clouds are formed and suspended over it, which may minister to all the bloom and luxuriance of vegetation; and of a fourth, that a white color spreads over its northern regions, as its winter advances, and that on the approach of summer this whiteness is dissipated—giving room to suppose, that the element of water abounds in it, that it rises by evaporation into its atmosphere, that it freezes upon the application of cold, that it is precipitated in the form of snow, that it covers the ground with a fleecy mantle, which melts away from the heat of a more vertical sun; and that other worlds bear a resemblance to our own, in the same yearly round of beneficent and interesting changes.

Who shall assign a limit to the discoveries of future ages? Who can prescribe to science her boundaries, or restrain the active and insatiable curiosity of man within the circle of his present acquirements? We may guess with plausibility what we cannot anticipate with confidence. The day may yet be coming, when our instruments of observation shall be inconceivably more powerful. They may ascertain still more decisive points of resemblance. They may resolve the same question by the evidence of sense which is now so abundantly convincing by the evidence of analogy. They may lay open to us the unquestionable vestiges of art, and industry, and intelligence. We may see summer throwing its green mantle over these mighty tracts, and we may see them left naked and colorless after the flush of vegetation has disappeared. In the progress of years, of centuries, we may trace the hand of cultivation spreading a new aspect over some portion of a planetary surface. Perhaps some large city, the metropolis of a mighty empire, may expand into a visible spot by the powers of some future telescope. Perhaps the glass of some observer, in a distant age, may enable him to construct a map of another world, and to lay down the surface of it in all its minute and topical varieties.—But there is no end of conjecture, and to the men of other times we leave the full assurance of what we can assert with the highest probability, that yon planetary orbs are so many worlds that they team with life, and that the mighty Being who presides in high authority over this scene of grandeur and astonishment, has there planted worshippers of his glory.

Did the discoveries of science stop here, we have enough to justify the exclamation of the Psalmist, "What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou shouldst deign to visit him?" They widen the empire of creation far beyond the limits which were formerly assigned to it. They give us to see that yon sun, throned in the centre of his planetary system, gives light, and warmth, and the vicissitude of seasons, to an extent of surface several hundreds of times greater than that of the earth which we inhabit. They lay open to us a number of worlds, rolling in their respective circles around this vast luminary—and prove, that the ball which we tread upon, with all its mighty burden of oceans and continents, instead of being distinguished from the others, is among the least of them; and, from some of the more distant planets, would not occupy a more visible point in the concave of their firmament. They let us know, that though this mighty earth, with all its myriads of people, were to sink into annihilation, there are some worlds where an event so awful to us would be unnoticed and unknown, and others where it would be nothing more than the disappearance of a little star which had ceased from its twinkling.—We should feel a sentiment of modesty at this just but humiliating representation. We should learn not to look on our earth as the universe of God, but one paltry and insignificant portion of it; that it is only one of the many mansions which the supreme Being has created for the accommodation of his worshippers, and only one of the many worlds rolling in that flood of light which the sun pours around him to the outer limits of the planetary system.

But is there nothing beyond these limits? The planetary system has its boundary, but space has none; and if we wing our fancy there, do we only travel through dark and unoccupied regions? There are only five, or at most six, of the planetary orbs visible to the naked eye. What, then, is that multitude of other lights which sparkle in our firmament, and fill the whole concave of heaven with innumerable splendors? The planets are all attached to the sun; and, in circling around him, they do homage to that influence which binds them to perpetual attendance on this great luminary. But the other stars do not own his dominion. They do not circle around him. To all common observation, they remain immovable;—and each, like the independent sovereign of his own territory, appears to occupy the same inflexible position in the regions of immensity. What can we make of them? Shall we take our adventurous flight to explore these dark and untravelled dominions? What mean these innumerable fires lighted up in distant parts of the universe? Are they only made to shed a feeble glimmering over this little spot in the kingdom of nature? or do they serve a purpose worthier of them-